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PCSW

Permanent Commission on the Status of Women

The State's leading force for women's equality since 1973.

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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Appropriations Committee
February 22, 2013**

Re: The Governor's Proposed Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget: Department of Social Services

Senators Harp and Kane, Representatives Walker and Miner, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) regarding the Governor's recommendations regarding the FY 2014-2015 budget for the Department of Social Services.

Specifically PCSW is concerned about the impact of the budgetary cuts on women if the following recommendations are passed:

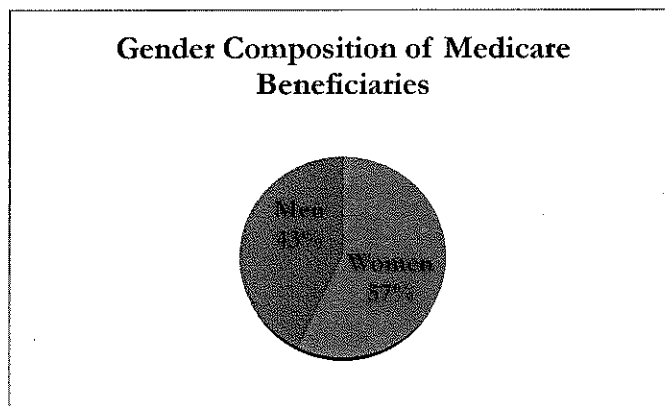
- Reducing income eligibility for HUSKY parents from 185% of FPL to 133% of FPL
- Eliminating Care 4 Kids for Post-TFA families whose income rises to more than 50% of the state median income, and;
- "Streamlining" several line items, including emergency assistance, safety net services, services to the elderly, services for persons with disabilities, and teen pregnancy into one community services line item.

Impact on CT Women

HUSKY

Medicaid, the state-federal health coverage program for the poor, provides low-income women with basic health and long-term care coverage. While often not considered to be a women's health program, women comprise 55% of adult beneficiaries in Connecticut.¹

¹ The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. *Connecticut: Health Insurance Coverage for Women Ages 18-64, 2009.*



Connecticut is currently developing a healthcare model to implement the federal Affordable Care Act in 2014. It is important to maintain women's health services in the final healthcare model, as well as provide gender appropriate, culturally competent, comprehensive and preventive, affordable and accessible healthcare.

Care 4 Kids

Work supports such as childcare are critical to helping low-income mothers gain and maintain employment. A study conducted by the Center for Economic and Policy Research examined how patterns of childcare access affect women's employment outcomes. The author points out that, in order to receive publicly funded childcare, many women need to either be on welfare or have just exited welfare. Many working families cannot afford to purchase childcare, and only those who very recently left welfare have any likelihood of receiving public benefits. This creates a hole in the safety net for low-wage working women who do not have sufficient income to purchase childcare in the market.² Allowing families with incomes between 133% and 185% of the FPL would eliminate one barrier to gaining and retaining sustainable employment, and therefore allow many low-income mothers to attain or continue employment.

Streamlining Line Items

Although on its face this proposal may seem innocuous, PCSW is concerned because it is not clear how each program will continue to receive full funding and if the existing services will be adequately met.

We look forward to working with you to address these important issues. Thank you for your consideration.

² Heather Boushey, Ph.D. *The Effects on Employment and Wages When Medicaid and Child Care Subsidies are No Longer Available*. Center for Economic and Policy Research, January 26, 2005. < http://www.cepr.net/publications/Effects_on_employment_wages_without_medicaid_child_care_subsidies.htm>.